

## SENATE FINANCE &amp; CLAIMS

Exhibit No.

70

Date

3-18-11

Bill No.

HB2

Savanna R. Bell  
115 5<sup>th</sup> Ave West  
Polson, MT 59860  
March 15, 2011

Dear Senate Finance and Claim Committee:

I was recently made aware of the upcoming decision to cut or completely remove the family planning program from the state of Montana. I believe this would be a big mistake, and not only will the people using the program suffer, but so will the rest of the economy.

I have been directly affected by the help of the Family Planning program. I began utilizing Family Planning when I was fourteen years old and am now twenty-four years old. As most of us know, fourteen is an extremely young age to begin having sexual intercourse. Although I thought I was mature and old enough to make my own decisions, the only right one I made was going to Family Planning. The help and knowledge I was given through this program kept me and my partners safe from pregnancy and diseases and overall, saved my life.

What are we telling our children and young adults now if we remove one of the biggest, most effective ways to keep them safe and educated? Family Planning is about reaching out to the younger generations and saying, "Hey, we can't stop you from having sex, but we can TEACH you about the risks, and give you the tools you'll need to keep yourself and your partners safe. Without this program, where will they go? How much more common is teen pregnancy going to become? It's already a problem as it is, why would we take away the help that is offered to not just teens and young adults, but to the older generation as well?

On behalf of all of the young teenagers out there, I ask you, please don't get rid of the program that's trying to help our younger generation. This program is needed so greatly. Within the last year alone I have referred two young teenagers that I know personally to the Family Planning Clinic. If there's no program to help them, where are they to go? Please think of the consequences we could all face if this program is taken away.

Sincerely,



Savanna R. Bell